

GIVING UP JOBS FOR UNITY

TRIDENT Marine Engineering workers with Section 10 J (a) and (b) rights, entitling them to stay permanently in Cape Town, have made an impressive stand of solidarity with their fellow contract workers.

When the Trident bosses announced they were going to retrench (lay off) workers earlier this month, 13 workers with Section 10 rights volunteered to be the first to go so that the contract workers would not have to return to barren homelands where jobs are almost impossible to find.

The workers are all members of the General Workers' Union.

Protect

The GWU and the workers' committee had already negotiated a retrenchment method with the Trident Marine bosses, to protect workers from bearing the full brunt of the economic recession.

During a recession, when factories produce less, bosses usually sack workers. What is important here is that the union forced the bosses to consult the workers first.

Security

The union has pointed out that the recession is no fault of the workers and they should be entitled to greater job security.

The workers' committee at Trident were consulted by the bosses about the retrenchment. Through negotiation they managed to cut it down by about half.

They also decided that the Section 10 workers would volunteer to be laid off. Even though it is difficult for them to get jobs, it is far more difficult for contract workers.

UNITY

'Poverty in the homelands will only be made worse if migrant workers are sent back.

We are proud of the workers stand.

A GWU spokesperson said both the union and the workers were concerned about the effects of retrenchments on workers, particularly contract workers. Rural poverty in the homelands will only be made worse if migrant wor-

kers are sent back.

The union said it was proud of the stand taken by the Trident workers.

"It is an example of the unity between Section 10 workers and migrants in our union," said the spokesperson.



LJ 259 062

The fight for urban rights

AFRICANS suffer under many apartheid laws. Of the worse are those which force them to stay in the homelands, where there is no work. In Cape Town there are thousands of workers who have contracts to work here. Some have worked and lived in Cape Town all their lives.

If they can prove they have work and

accommodation in Cape Town, they are granted section 10 rights.

Mr Stanford Booie, a Fattis & Monis worker was granted section 10 rights by the Supreme Court on the basis that he had worked for one employer for 10 years.

It was thought to be an important decision, since thousands of other contract workers in the Peninsula have worked for one employer for more than 10 years. At present, they do not have rights to remain permanently in the Cape.

They, like Mr Booie, should get section 10 rights.

But, the Western Cape Administration Board has refused to endorse the passbooks of hundreds of workers who applied on that basis.

The Administration Board say they are waiting for an appeal by the East Rand Administration Board against a court decision which involves a Mr Tom Rokhoto from previously won a court case to receive permanent residence rights.

The people say the Board in Cape Town is using that case as an excuse only. "Why must the courts decide if I can live with my husband, or change my job, or move from Cape

Town to any other place", asked one woman.

The influx control laws of the government does not allow Africans to do those things.

It divides Africans in the cities into 3 classes:

- those who can work and live in Cape Town
- those who can only work in Cape Town, but have to go back to the Ciskei
- those who are not allowed to work or live in Cape Town.

Fourteen years ago, the Department of Bantu Administration drew up a set of regulations affecting African contract workers. They had to renew their contract every year, the regulations said.

Thus the Administration Board argued that workers had not worked "continuously" for 10 years for one employer, since they restarted on their jobs every year.

Last year a Mrs Komani challenged this regulation in court. She won the right to live with her husband, who had rights to live permanently in Cape Town.

While the government is preparing new laws to tighten up influx control, it is important that they be challenged by the people.

Victory for rail workers

CONSTANT pressure by the General Workers Union (GWU) has ended in victory for the workers on the railways.

The railways management - the South African Transport Services (SATS) - has finally stopped deducting subscriptions for the Black Staff Association (BSA) from 546 railway workers. These workers, in the Port Elizabeth docks resigned from BSA more than four months ago.

The workers are all members of the General Workers' Union, yet SATS have been deducting subscriptions from the workers' wages for the BSA since October last year.

The GWU said they were pleased to see that railway workers in PE were no longer forced to belong to an organisation they had clearly rejected. The union is concerned that the workers' major grievances are still unanswered.

SATS has so far refused to recognise the GWU workers' committees in the PE and East London docks, saying they will not deal with "outside unions."

More than 800 railway workers belong to the GWU in the PE harbour, and about 250 in East London. The union says they represent the majority in both ports.

Workers in PE have complained of continual harassment by the Railways police, saying they have been assaulted, intimidated and even offered money if they resign from the GWU. Last month 848 workers wrote a letter to the Port Manager complaining of the way they had

been treated by the Railways police.

The workers said they expected questions about their union from the manager of SATS and not from the police.

The GWU says the major grievances of the workers are:

- managements' refusal to recognise a channel of communication between them and the representative chosen by the workers
- the continual harassment of union members in the docks.

SATS has also backed down on a previous decision not to allow GWU organisers to collect subscriptions from the stevedores in the harbours.

This has come after Railways harassment of union organisers, who were collecting stevedore subscriptions in some of the ports where they have members.

For over two years stevedores subscriptions have been collected in Cape Town and more recently in other ports. About a month ago, SATS told the stevedore bosses the GWU was no longer allowed to use the premises in Cape Town to collect subs.

The stevedores asked their bosses to approach SATS for a guarantee that the union would be able to collect subs in all four ports where they have members. SATS gave a guarantee that subs could be collected in Cape Town. The stevedores said they would not be satisfied until the guarantee applied to all four ports.

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